3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

FOREWORD

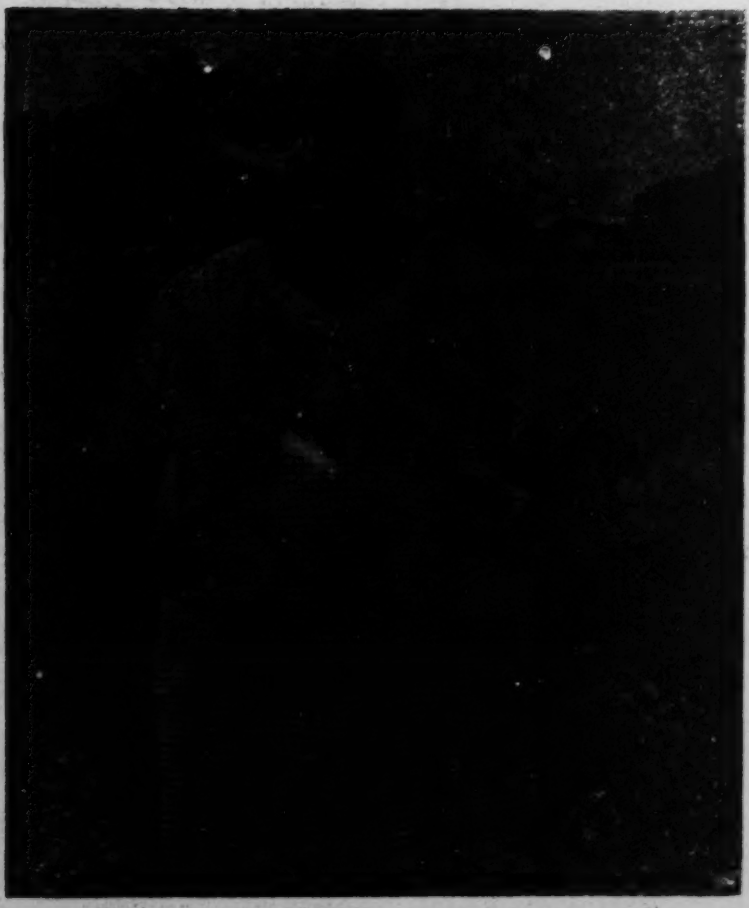
The Yokuts or Yokoch Indians and F. F. Latta are an extraordinary combination.

This great Indian nationality once held the whole floor of the San Joaquin Valley, plus much of the adjoining foothill belt on both sides. Numbering some eighteen to twenty thousand souls, they were clustered into nearly fifty independent local tribes, mostly friendly to one another. Though each tribe definitely held its own delimited territory, there was constant visiting and return visiting, as nature according to season most bountifully provided fish, fowl, game, seeds, acorns or roots once here and then there. In their three hundred miles of range, the Yokuts were the most extensive as they were perhaps the most populous of the many diverse nationalities of aboriginal California. Each Yokuts tribe spoke its own slightly divergent dialect or sub-dialect; but all the way from Stockton to Bakersfield there prevailed at least partial intelligibility. Customs and institutions evinced a similar basic uniformity, varied by local peculiarities of detail, over the total stretch of the San Joaquin Valley. They were a tall, well built people of open outlook, were the Yokuts: frank, up-standing, casual and unceremonious, optimistic and friendly, fond of laughter, not given to cares of property or too much worry about tomorrow; and they lived in direct simple relation to their land and world, to its animals, spirits, and gods, and to one another.

F. F. Latta, the friend and historian of the Yokuts, is one of those rare beings—a natural-born ethnographer. That means he is a describer of other peoples' exotic ways and customs, an interpreter of their temperaments, a sympathetic reporter of their fortunes. Born and raised in the Great Valley, and long one of its better-known educators, he understands locale and environment, whites as well as Indians. In his observations, he is not only meticulous, but remarkably reliable. The accuracy of his accounts has particularly impressed me, for I studied the Yokuts too, between 1900 and 1910, at a time when far more of

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

101
103
131
619
[142
367

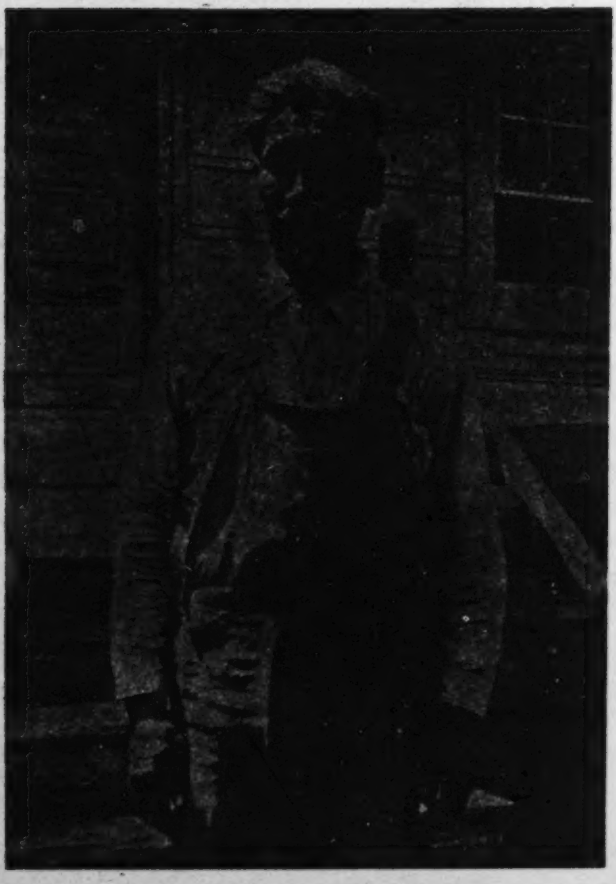


Mary Tipp, last surviving full-blood of the Nutunutu tribe from lower Kings River.

South of the Choinimni, on Mill Creek, were the *Michahai*. Still farther south near Dunlap were the *Entimbits* (En-tim'-bits), a tribe sometimes classified as Shoshonean. Pine Ridge, due north of Dunlap was called *Lokhoey*, or Deer Place, and was an Entimbits landmark. Sontag Point, east and slightly north of Dunlap was another Entimbits landmark, called *Toyahbe*, meaning Rocky Hill. It has a grey granite outcrop-

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

159
361
[142]



This man was living at San Benito in 1925. When a young girl his grandmother had been taken from a village in the tules east of present Los Banos and kept at Mission San Juan Bautista. He is probably not a full-blood, but has interesting features.

Gustine]. There had been big Indian village there. We saw lots big holes in ground where Indian got their houses. Sopahno tell me he was there to big *Lonewis* (Lo-ne'-wis) [mourning dance for the dead] when he was small boy. He call that village *Hah-kah'-wahl*. He said it was Honoumne village.

"Sopahno's old-time stories were just like ours—how Eagle make the world, how Antelope make the milky way, and 159 773

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

"We made a fort, principally on account of our animals. The Indians brought otter skins, and several kinds of fish, and bread made of acorns, to trade.

"Among them were several who had come to live among these Indians when the missions were broken up, and who spoke Spanish fluently. They informed us that they were called by the Spainards 'mansitos', (tame) in distinction from the wilder tribes of the mountains.

"They, however, think themselves very insecure, not knowing at what unforseen moment the sins of the latter may be visited upon them. They are dark skinned, but handsome and intelligent Indians, and live principally on acorns and the roots of the tule, of which also their huts are made."

The last is one of the few complimentary things written by Frémont about Indians. A similar account of the Kaweah River Indians is given in the report of the survey of July, 1850, by Lieutenant George H. Derby. An extract from the Derby report follows:

"Upon the 14th we arrived at the river Frances, [Kaweah] a large stream nineteen miles to the north of the Tule. This stream flows nearly west from the hills and empties into the Tache Lake about twenty miles north of its southeastern extremity.

"It is, at the point upon which we arrived, divided into five branches or sloughs, four of which separate from the main river, about five miles above, joining again from one to ten miles below, while the southern branch has a separate and distinct course from the Sierra which joins the main stream in the marshy ground near its junction with the lake.

"The country, eight miles in length by six in width, contained between these branches, is a beautiful, smooth, level plain, covered with clover of different kinds, and high grass, and thickly shaded by one continuous grove of oaks of a larger and finer description than any I have seen in the country.

"At this time each of the creeks were at its height, they are deep and four of them much wider than the Tule River. Their beds were also obstructed with floating and sunken timber previously felled for bridges, which the high stage of the water rendered useless; and we would have found it difficult to cross had it not been for the kind assistance of the neighboring Indians who flocked to meet us, and eagerly went to work carrying instruments and other property upon their heads and

3: Latta-Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29
Yowlumne

161
[42]

Wahumchah and his sister, Ihalut, last surviving full-bloods of the Yowlumne Yokuts tribe. Both were born at the village of Wawcoye (Waw-coy'-e) on the south bank of Kern River one-half mile below the mouth of Cottonwood Creek. Wahumchah is eighty-six years of age and Ihalut ninety.

because they have been generally thought to have been extinct since about 1920.

One of the surviving Yowlumne is *Wahumchah* (Wah-hum'-chah) known to white people living in and around Woodlake and Visalia in Tulare County as Henry Lawrence. Wahumchah is now 86 years of age.

The second surviving full-blood Yowlumne is *I-hal'-ut*, known to her neighbors at Tule River Indian Reservation as Mrs. Mary Santiago. She is a full sister of Wahumchah and is 90 years of age. Both of these people were born at the old Yowlumne Indian village of *Wawcoye* on the south side of Kern River between the Rio Bravo Rancho and the mouth of Cottonwood Creek. When these two Yowlumne are gone, extinction will have been the fate of the tribe of Yokuts which once occupied the territory surrounding Bakersfield.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

[P. 74 not Processed]

CHAPTER IV

DRESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

YOKUTS MEN'S DRESS

291 If one is expecting a lengthy and detailed account of an extensive wardrobe worn by the various Yokuts tribes, he is doomed to disappointment. In dress they are often unfavorably compared with the Great Plains Indians. To do justice to these people, however, it must be known that the Great Plains Indians, with the exception of a few members of each tribe, did not appear as we are in the habit of seeing them pictured.

291 114 Probably the motion picture has been most responsible for the misinformation which has been spread about Indians. Pictures have been made in which we are assured that as many as two thousand Indians have been employed in the cast. From what one sees in the picture, one would never know but that every tribe was composed of at least nineteen hundred and ninety-nine chiefs and one common, ordinary Indian.

291 The elaborate dress and head dress which is so commonly placed upon the pictured Indian was worn by probably not more than six men in a tribe of two thousand Indians. Another Indian of that tribe, when he was not entitled to it, would have taken his own life before he would have placed the head dress of a chief upon his head.

The common citizen of the Great Plains tribes did not appear a great deal unlike the average Yokuts Indians, the principal difference being that the San Joaquin Valley natives were shorter and heavier and generally wore no foot covering of any sort. When the Spanish brought horses, hats and boots among them, they took the Spanish words for those articles and still use them when speaking their own language.

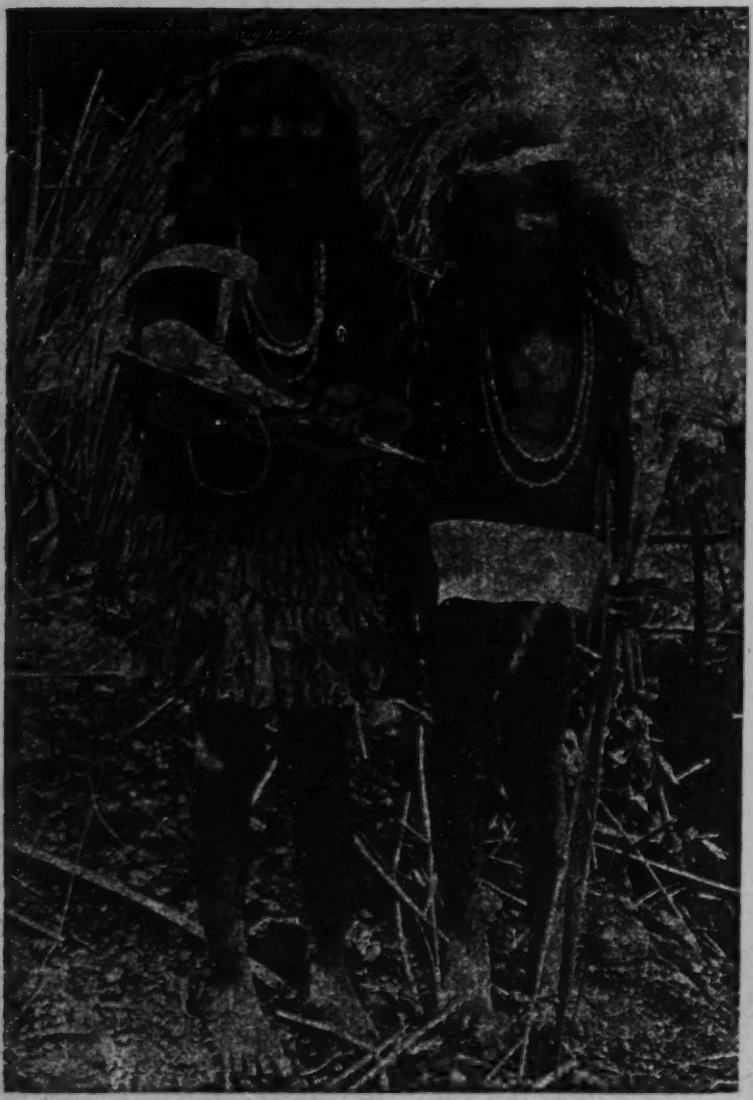
[142] [177]

302 The men wore their hair long, but probably did not braid it until after they became acquainted with white people. They bound their hair into two coils somewhat resembling braids. These hung in front of the shoulders over each ear. Most often the hair was allowed to hang loose, being thrown back over the shoulders. It was held in place by a string wrapped around the head just above the eye-brows. This string was generally made from the fiber of the milk weed, and had woven into it sacred down from the breast of the eagle, or from the red-tailed hawk.

[283 237]

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

142
291
301
302



Lewumit and Hewtoy, dressed in native costumes made by their grandparents, Ichow and Wehnomkot. The beads are of Indian manufacture, of steatite and shell materials. They were constructing the tule house which appears in the background.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29
Yowlumne

142
342
285

Wahumchah, aged 85 and last surviving man from the Yowlumne Yokuts who once lived about present Bakersfield, showing the use of the tule-mat door in a tule-thatched house.

3: Latta Y-5 (.923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

Wah-puk'-in and Ig'-we-un showing the interior of a Yokuts tule-thatched house and a bed. A shallow pit is filled with loose tules and covered with a tule mat. Covers consist of a doubled rabbit-skin blanket. Hanging from the house frame is a twined and a tule chewmish, or all-purpose hanging baskets. The large basket at the left shows kots, or obsidian arrow point. The one at the front right shows quail, arrow point and ants.

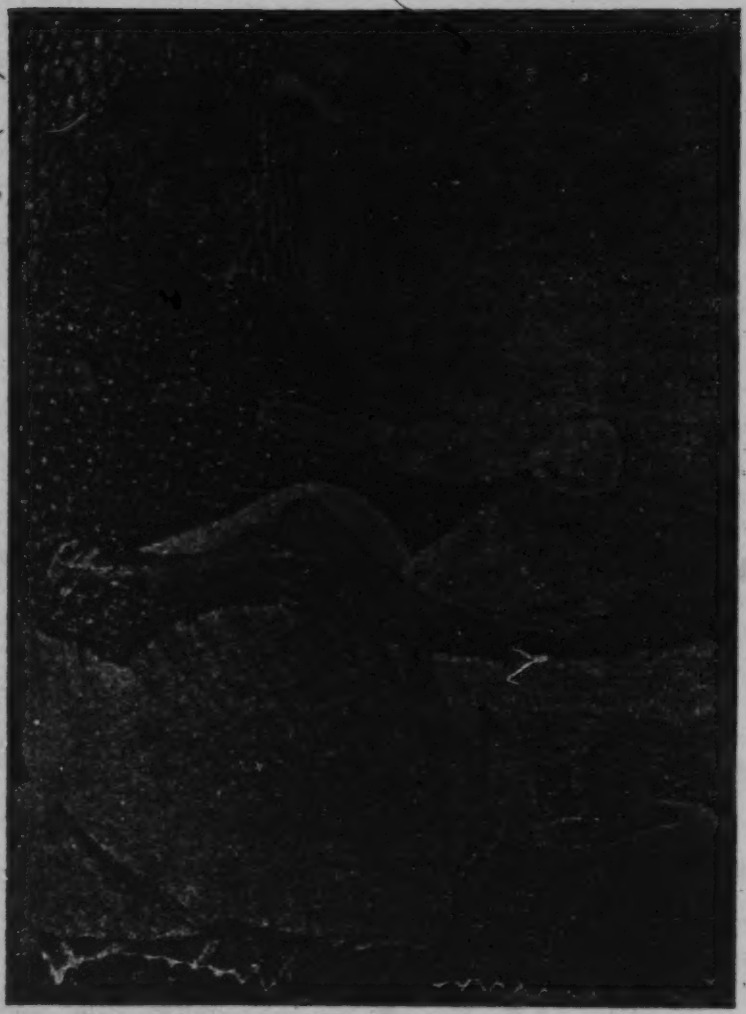
and meats and fish were suspended from the framework of the house overhead. In addition to these things was the usual collection of wild animal skins, prepared basketry materials, fiber for making string, and any amount of other raw materials from which were to be prepared the various articles necessary to the life of the Indians.

"At every permanent village occupied by two or three hundred Indians, there were probably from four or five to as many as a dozen of these larger semi-permanent houses. They were used for ten or twelve years, or until there was a death in the family, at which time the Indians burned the house in which the death occurred."

Often a sick or aged person was carried outside to die, so that it would not be necessary to burn the house. In 1937, *Ichow*, last Chief of the *Wukchumne*, died of dropsy after several days of exposure under a broiling July sun, because he

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

142
252
412
415
516



A Chukaimina woman preparing to pound acorns. Photo taken about 1900 by Mrs. A. D. Overholtzer, of Squaw Valley Corners.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

 252 415 [142 30] 302 [415 516]

Web-puk'-is showing how acorn flour is leached. A shallow basin is scooped in the sand of a stream bed and lined with wild grapevine leaves. It is then filled with acorn flour. Hot water is poured over the flour until the bitterness has been leached into the sand below. The water is poured on a grass brush so that the flour will not be washed away.

soap-root husk. The tray was held with the edge over the mortar and shaken.

The coarse particles rolled into the mortar and the fine material remained on the tray. The fine material was shaken into a separate basket. This process was repeated until the acorns were reduced to a powder of about the consistency of coarse flour. This was then taken to the stream, where the bitter tannin was leached from it. 252

A hole was made in the sand, by the stream, lined with leaves, generally from the wild grapevines, and the acorn flour poured into it. Water was heated in a separate basket by means of hot rocks and poured over the flour. This process was repeated several times, the flour being tasted for sweetness after

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

263
222

142
285
302
516

Wahnomkot, full-blood **Wukchumne** Yokuts from the Kaweah River east of Visalia. She is working in the old salt grass field near Guernsey, Kings County, where the Yokuts tribes have harvested salt from salt grass from time immemorial. On the ground is **toh'-menk**, generally made of cottonwood twigs and put to innumerable uses. This is a good illustration of features, posture, and the way the salt grass is pulled. The fingers of her right hand are bandaged in order to prevent the grass from cutting them.

mixing them with the refined product. The method by which this is done is extremely interesting, and has several times been witnessed and photographed by the writer.

The most desirable location in the vicinity of Tulare Lake was an area about four miles northeast of Guernsey. This area has been utilized as a harvest field for salt grass for at least one hundred and fifty years, and probably much longer.

Harvesting is done during the later part of July, or the first of August. At about ten or eleven o'clock the globules of salt are partly dried, too dry to be smeared in picking, and too

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

142
285
415

Wahsemket about 1928. In her right hand she holds a basket made to be suspended from the neck, leaving both hands free to pick blackberries. Leaning against her is a boy's baby cradle. In her left hand is the flexible cradle, made before the child is born and for use until the other is completed.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

142
292
301
293
791

[p.202]

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

Sinel, a Tachi medicine man and rain-maker from the north shore of Tulare Lake. He was born and died at the old Tachi village of Waiu, southeast of present Lemoore. His medicine costume is authentic, except for the wire belt and the beaded band worn diagonally across his chest. The wristlets and necklace are made of primitive periwinkle shell and soapstone beads. The large spangles are of abalone shell. The top of the headdress is made of magpie tail feathers, surrounded by a string of fine, down-covered feathers from the breast of the eagle. Next below is a mass of split crow tail-feathers and around the brow is a down-covered band. In the older days Sinel's face and body would have been painted black, his face decorated with large dots and his legs and arms with stripes of pure white paint made of native chalk. The ear ornaments are made of sparrow hawk and flicker feathers, the batons of red-tailed hawk and sparrow-hawk feathers. The skirt is made of milkweed strings into which have been twisted down from the breast of the eagle. The tips of the skirt strings have tied to them the tips of the tail feathers from the red-tailed hawk. Photo furnished by Mrs. Mary Pohut.

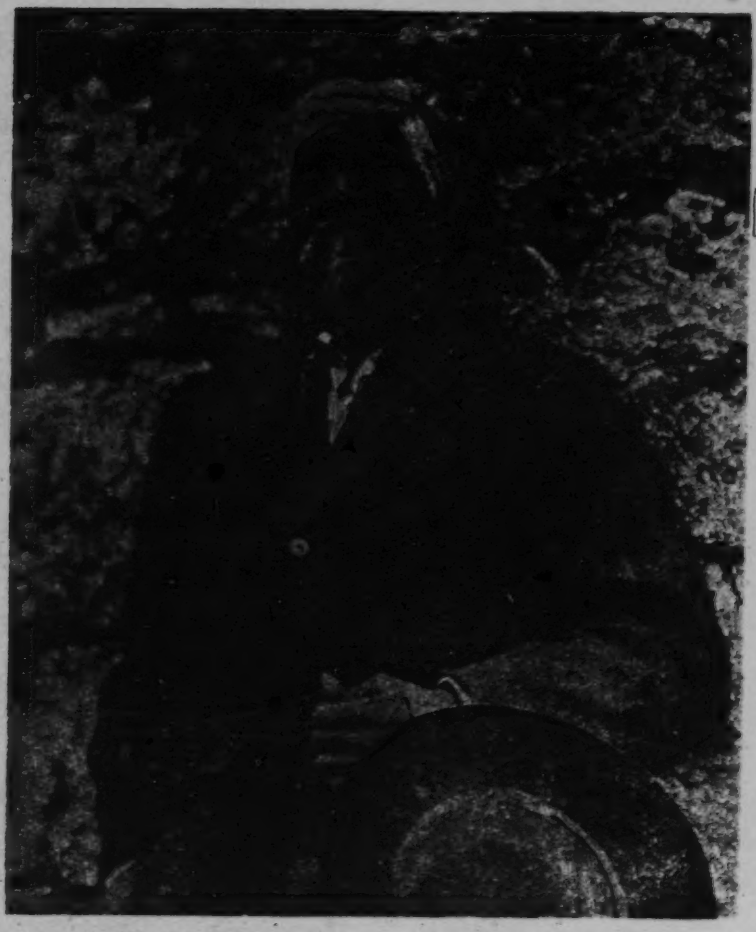
142 ●
292
293
301
791

[p. 203]

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

159
173
648

[142]



Pahmit in 1929, aged about 100 years, by the wall of the old stone guardhouse at Fort Miller. Pahmit helped to build this wall about 1854.

chaw'-se. He sign 'em: My father, *Dawk-taw,* he chief with Dumna tribe Indians. Some people call him *Tap'-pah.* He sign 'em. My uncle, To'-mas, he chief *Kit-cha'-ye* tribe. He sign 'em. Lots Indians sign 'em. Take long time. Then white chief go 'way.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

142
302

The late Yel'-must, last full-blood survivor of the Chunut (Choo'-noot) tribe from the northeast shore of Tulare Lake. She spoke seven languages and could read and write both Spanish and English. She dictated to the author many stories and songs that she had memorized. She was the historian of her tribe and the best informer of all races that the author has interviewed. Notice the scares on the bridge of her nose, the result of cuts made by Indian medicine men. She passed away at Hanford.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

159
769
142
302
291
516

"Old Bria," an aged, blind Wukchamma, showing a typical Yokuts head of coarse, heavy black hair bobbed in mourning, also a terribly embarrassed granddaughter. Photo, taken about 1900, was furnished by Jesse G. Pattee.

in Visalia. She paid sixteen dollars for it. She had a good hat, shoes, socks, and underwear.

Mother stuffed the clothes with tules and fastened them together so they looked like a man. She painted the face. Then

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

142
177
302
516
756
304

Jennie, an aged **Wukchumne**, and her granddaughter. This photo is of importance because the granddaughter has on the bridge of her nose the marks of fresh cuts made by a medicine man. Her grandmother has on her nose the scars of such doctoring. Both have their hair bobbed in mourning. Jennie was a **Chumlus** at the great Eshom Valley Ghost Dance. Photo, taken about 1890, was furnished by Jesse G. Pattee.

159
769
[775]

Then you bury your father, mother, maybe your wife. You put everything in ground and all decay. We *burn* good clothes and they *do not* decay. They go to *Tih-pik'-nits Pahs* [the hereafter] so our dead person always has good clothes to wear. What do you think?

On the sixth morning everyone was dancing when *Tow-ahn'-itch*, the morning star, was beginning to fade and it was getting daylight. The Teah called, "He'-ahm tahn'-hin," and everyone ran to the creek to be washed. The dancing and singing and crying of the Lonewis was over. We could be washed and dressed in our new clothes and have a big feast of meat and let our hair grow again.

159
767
769

The *Chumlus* had our new clothes and new baskets to wash us in. She washed my mother and me. We took off our clothes

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

142

Ichow, husband of Wuhnemhet and, when he died about 1936, chief of the Wukchumne, last organized tribe of Yokuts Indians. Ichow was a fine old character and, with his wife, appeared with the author on many programs throughout the San Joaquin Valley. He attended the ghost dance in Rahom valley. He died soon after this photo was made.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

142
285
291
301
302

Lewaynit and Hawtoy, dressed in native costumes made by their grandparents, Ishew and Wahnemlet. Lewaynit was a good student. During her first year in school, where all other children were white, she completed two years of work in one and stood at the head of her class. She died of tuberculosis while in her Sophmore year at Exeter High School.